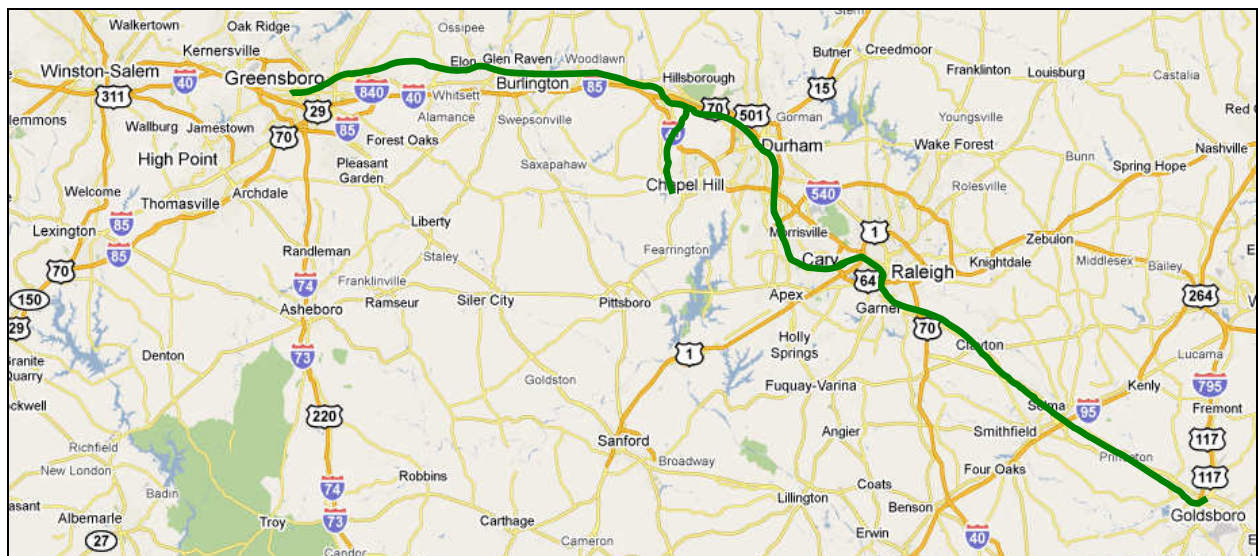


# 1 Introduction

The North Carolina Railroad Company (NCRR) retained Steer Davies Gleave<sup>1</sup> to perform a ridership and revenue forecasting study of potential commuter rail service on a portion of the rail corridor that it owns. The NCRR corridor stretches 317 miles from Charlotte to Morehead City, serving many of the major population and employment centers in North Carolina. The scope of the ridership study included the 143-mile section of the NCRR-owned corridor between Greensboro and Goldsboro (which includes Burlington, Mebane, Hillsborough, Durham, Raleigh, Garner, Clayton, Selma, and Princeton), and the Norfolk Southern-controlled line from Durham to Chapel Hill/Carrboro. The study corridor, which is shown in Figure 1.1 below, is the section of the NCRR corridor east of the heavier north-south freight main line, and is the same segment for which NCRR conducted a commuter rail capacity study in 2008. Note that commuter rail service west of Greensboro was not included in the scope of this study, because Piedmont Area Regional Transit (PART) has conducted studies to evaluate commuter rail service in the area west of the NCRR corridor.

**FIGURE 1.1      STUDY CORRIDOR MAP**



## 2 Background

Currently, the full NCRR corridor is maintained and used for freight service by Norfolk Southern (NS) under an exclusive trackage rights agreement. Norfolk Southern operates approximately 70 freight trains per day on the corridor. In addition, four Amtrak passenger routes—the Carolinian, the Crescent, the Piedmont, and the Silver Star—utilize part of the NCRR corridor. The Carolinian and Piedmont use the Selma-Charlotte portion of the corridor, the Crescent uses the Greensboro-Charlotte portion, and the Silver Star uses the Selma-Cary portion. Each of these routes is served by one daily train in each

<sup>1</sup> In January 2009, Steer Davies Gleave established its US headquarters in Boston by acquiring the transportation planning group of Charles River Associates in a friendly transaction.